

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 6 are pending in this application, with claim 1 being the only independent claim. Dependent claim 3 has been canceled. Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Claim 3 stands objected to for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Dependent claim 3 has been canceled. This objection is therefore moot.

Claims 1-4 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,941,730 (“*Uchiyama*”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,478,613 *Zoell*. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, “a plug arranged in the receiving device, the plug having electrical contacts for connecting an electric motor of the fuel pump to a mains supply and an integrally formed, circumferential sealing lip which includes a region that is oriented toward the electrical contacts and which seals the plug against the receiving device when fuel is conveyed through the fuel pump”. The combination of the cited art fails to teach or suggest a plug which is configured in the foregoing manner.

The Examiner has acknowledged that *Uchiyama* fails to teach or suggest “a plug that is extrusion coated with plastic”, as recited in independent claim 1, and cites *Zoell* for this feature. Applicants, however, respectfully contend that the combination of *Uchiyama* and *Zoell* fails to achieve the fuel pump of independent claim 1.

Uchiyama discloses a connector installation structure for a fuel tank. According to *Uchiyama*, “a holding sleeve for receiving a connector for the fuel tank is fixed through a cover plate adapted to be mounted on a wall of the fuel tank and the connector can be prevented from

coming out of the cover plate by elastically fitting a clip on the connector so as to engage with the holding sleeve” (see col. 1, lines 50-57).

Uchiyama (col. 1, lines 57-64) further explains that “[t]he connector comprises: a plug body adapted to be fitted in the holding sleeve; an inner connection portion having a smaller diameter than the plug body and adapted to be contained in the fuel tank; and an outer connection portion projecting outwardly from the fuel tank. Consequently, the clip is elastically fitted to an outer periphery of the inner connection portion so as to engage with the holding sleeve”.

In *Uchiyama*, however, an upwardly flared inlet 27 is provided on the lid plate. Even if the flared inlet 27 is considered to be a sealing lip, *Uchiyama* still fails to teach or suggest that the circumferential sealing lip is integrally formed in the plug, as recited in independent claim 1. FIG. 1 of *Uchiyama* clearly shows that the upwardly flared inlet 27 is not integrally formed in the plug but, rather, the flared inlet is located separately from the plug. Moreover, the flared lip 27 functions as a positioning device. That is, the inlet 27 defines the position of the holding sleeve 24 in relation to plate 22. *Uchiyama* therefore fails to teach or suggest “a plug arranged in the receiving device, the plug having electrical contacts for connecting an electric motor of the fuel pump to a mains supply and an integrally formed, circumferential sealing lip which includes a region that is oriented toward the electrical contacts and which seals the plug against the receiving device when fuel is conveyed through the fuel pump”. *Uchiyama* thus fails to teach or suggest the expressly recited subject matter of independent claim 1.

Zoell, on the other hand, is directed to extrusion coating components of a fuel pump so that they become protected from corrosion caused by the fuel. *Zoell* (col. 3, lines, 26-28) explains that “the connector 1 is plugged onto the bearing plate 10, after assembly”. *Zoell* (col.

3, line 30 to col. 4, line 4) additionally explains that “[t]he carbon brushes 5 are mounted, such that they can move, in the receptacles 11 in the bearing plate 10, in such a manner that they can move downward in the event of wear resulting from the electric motor, which is not illustrated but is arranged under the bearing plate 10”. However, *Zoell* also fails to teach or suggest a plug having electrical contacts for connecting an electric motor of the fuel pump to a mains supply and an integrally formed, circumferential sealing lip which includes a region that is oriented toward the electrical contact and which seals the plug against the receiving device when fuel is conveyed through the fuel pump, as now recited in amended independent claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, independent claim 1 is patentable over the combination of *Uchiyama* and *Zoell*. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are therefore in order, and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

In view of the patentability of independent claim 1, dependent claims 2-4 and 6 are also patentable over the prior art for the reasons set forth above, as well as for the additional recitations contained therein.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is in condition for allowance. Early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions, or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned in order to facilitate reaching a resolution of any outstanding issues.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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